GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2654
ANSWERED ON:17.03.2017
Gender Disparity
Misra Shri Pinaki

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note of exploitation, harassment and discrimination of women in different field in the country and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the Government has also taken note that India has downgraded its position and slipped to 136th rank out of 144 in the empowering women in economic sphere, as per the World Economic Forum's report on Global Gender Gap and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the Government has reviewed all the developmental programmes/ schemes to assess the reasons for downgrading its position and if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and
(d) the steps being taken by the Government to address the issue of gender disparity and check exploitation harassment and discrimination of women in the country and regain its ranking?

Answer

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI)

(a) The Ministry of Women and Child Development has noted with concern the incidence of exploitation, harassment and discrimination against women in different fields in the country. The Ministry also notes that exploitation, harassment and discrimination against women arise out of unequal economic, social and political status of women, and the deeply entrenched socio-cultural stereotypes etc.

(b) As per the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2016, India ranks at 136th in respect of "economic participation and opportunity" among 144 countries of the World. However, it has improved its ranking moving from 139th position in 2015 to 136th position in 2016.

(c) The Government of India from time to time reviews its developmental programmes/ schemes to assess the defects and gaps in the implementation process and accordingly, mid-course corrections are taken in the implementation of these programmes/ schemes for the betterment of the women folk as a whole.
(d): The Government of India has taken several steps/ measures, interventions and strengthened institutional mechanism towards empowerment of women and for elimination of gender disparity and inequality. The schemes/ programmes implemented by the Government of India in this regard are as under:
(i) The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has been launched to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio on a life cycle continuum basis;
(ii) ICDS is being implemented to address the nutritional needs of children and pregnant and lactating women;
(iii) Matritva Sahyog Yojana for pregnant and lactating women to improve their health and nutrition status;
(iv) Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), implemented with the objective of reducing Maternal and Infant Mortality;
(v) Scheme for Adolescent Girls (earlier named as Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Adolescent Girls-Sabla) aims at the empowerment of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 years through nutrition, health care and life skill education;
(vi) Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhayamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) schemes are being implemented to universalize elementary and secondary education respectively, having a strong focus on improving enrolment and retention of girls;
(vii) Support to Training & Employment programme for Women (STEP) scheme aims to ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalized and asset-less rural and urban women;
(viii) Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) aims to extend micro-finance services to bring about socio-economic upliftment of poor women; and
(ix) The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) helps in economic and social empowerment of women.
(x) Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016 has been passed by the Parliament recently which is going to raise maternity leave to 26 weeks, protecting the employment of women during the time of her maternity.
The Government of India has also undertaken a number of measures to check exploitation, harassment and violence against women in the spheres of domestic, workplace and public. There is a robust legal framework evolved over the years. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 has widened the definition of rape, and new offences like acid attack, sexual harassment etc. have been included. Further, it casts duty on all hospitals, public or private, to provide free medical treatment to victims of sexual assault. Advisories have been issued for 33% reservation for women in the police force. One Stop Centres integrated with Women Helpline (181) have been established across the country to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence. Engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers has been initiated to act as a link between police and public. Further, to address the problem of crimes committed against women in the cyber space, comprehensive guidelines have been issued on the matrimonial sites. The Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 has been amended in 2015 to include the juveniles in conflict with law in the age group of 16 to 18 years involved in heinous offenses to be tried as adults. Panic button has been mandated in mobile phones with effect from 01.01.2017 wherein all new feature phones will have this facility.

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